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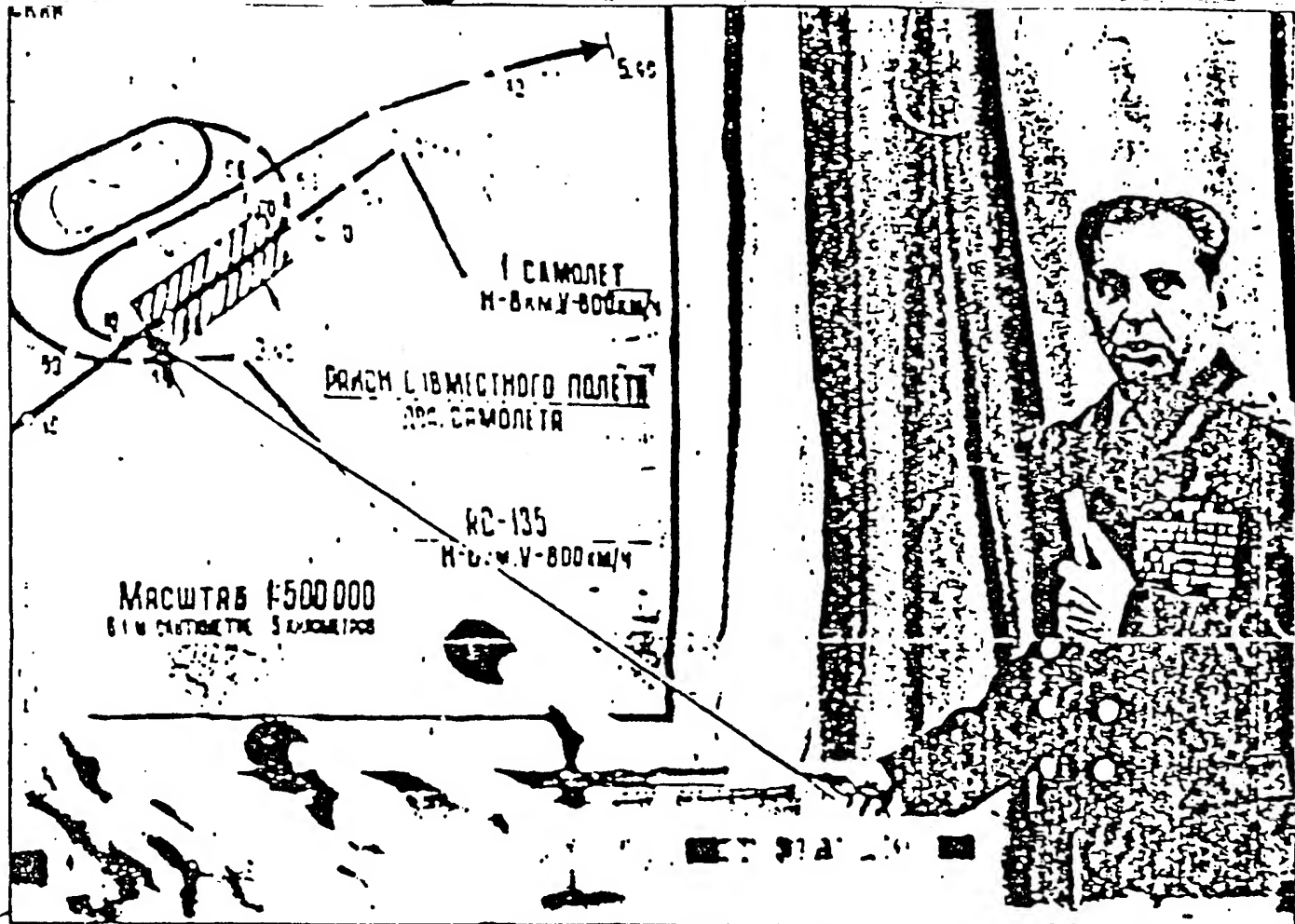
DEFENCE ATTACHE (UK)
Issue 384 - June 1984

Now that initial strong reactions to the downing of the Korean Airliner flight KAL 007 with the loss of 269 lives have subsided, it may be appropriate to commence a dispassionate analysis of the horrific incident. The aim of this appraisal is purely to try and understand what might have happened, and the method is to introduce some new and hitherto unpublished perspectives. The editor does not necessarily agree with all the author's views, and, indeed, this magazine has already stated that it did not believe that KAL 007 had a "spy" mission, but the fresh material adduced here gives much to ponder. Yet in public at least, apart from occasional snide remarks, the superpowers seem to have dropped the issue, even though many questions concerned with the

Sakhalin incident remain unanswered; many now posed by the article have not been asked before, let alone resolved. Defence Attaché has therefore decided to publish this disturbing review of the facts in the hope that it will inspire further investigation. Scientific inquiry is needed, not name-calling and mud-slinging.

The author, who for professional reasons must remain anonymous is well known to the editor and is willing to enter into correspondence on any of the issues raised here or to supply further background. Letters addressed to The Editor will be forwarded by Defence Attaché, which reserves the right to publish extracts.

Reassessing the Sakhalin incident



Soviet Chief of Staff Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov indicates the coincident flight of KAL 007 and the RC-135, at the same height and speed, some 200-250mi from Soviet territory — ie towards maximum range for ground-based radar. Map time 5.00 shown for commencement equals 16.00 GMT. At 16.10 the RC-135 turned back. KAL 007 made the first Soviet landfall at 16.30

IN MAY 1960 a U-2 reconnaissance aircraft piloted by Gary Powers was brought down in the vicinity of Sverdlovsk in the Soviet Union. This event not only demolished the Paris Summit Meeting between Eisenhower and Khrushchev, but signalled the end of the ability to use aircraft for reconnaissance purposes over the USSR. This function could now only be performed by satellite, but at the time of the U-2's destruction no payload had ever been returned from space. Discoverer was the name of the US programme dedicated to developing the capability for photographic reconnaissance from earth orbit, with the return of a film-containing capsule. The first recovery was achieved with

Discoverer 13, launched 9 August 1960. By 1963/1964 the US had attained an advanced operational capability with photographic reconnaissance satellites and had put them to sophisticated tactical use.

It would have been surprising if, during the period when photo-reconnaissance (PR) satellite techniques were completing their development — a process which was fairly obvious to any interested student — corresponding efforts had not been made to develop electronic intelligence, or ELINT satellites, universally known as Ferrets. In fact, Ferrets came along only a couple of years behind their PR counterparts, although for various reasons electronic